



Fall
2012



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GPSC News

Volume 11 Issue 4

**Hearings held in Taylor,
Chickamauga and Ringgold*

**Rate increases requested
*Customers oppose any
increase*

**Rate case proceedings held
August 14*

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Commission Listens to Rural Telecommunications Consumers

The Commission listened to customers of three rural telecommunications companies during public comment hearings in Taylor on August 9, and in Chickamauga and Ringgold, Georgia on August 13. The hearings were part of the Commission's rate case proceedings involving Public Service Telephone Company, Chickamauga Telephone Company and Ringgold Telephone Company in Docket 35568.

Local citizens packed the rooms where the meetings were held.



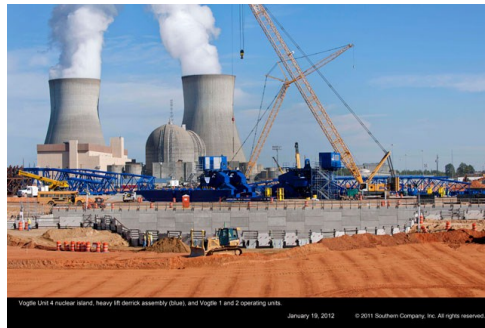
A standing room only crowd in Chickamauga

Public officials from all three jurisdictions also attended the hearings. As expected, the consumers and officials unanimously approved the rate increases.

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Commission Approves Nuclear Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report

The Commission August 21 approved the Sixth semi-annual Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report. The Commission unanimously adopted a Commission staff recommendation to verify and approve the Company's filed expenditures through the period ending December 31, 2011



Construction Underway

and to continue the Project as beneficial to the Company's ratepayers. In the Commission's certification of the construction Project on March 17, 2009, the Company agreed to file semi-

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**Next
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Governor Issues Budget Directives

The budget cutting for state agencies is apparently not over. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget issued budget instructions on July 1, 2012 that direct all state departments, agencies and commission to input budget submissions for the Amended FY 2013 and FY 2014 budgets with three per cent state funding reductions.

In the meantime, **Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** sent a letter to Governor Deal on August 17 asking that the Governor reconsider budget cuts to the Commission.

"Bearing in mind the potential

downside of cutting the PSC budget you may want to reconsider further cuts particularly during the coming year when the PSC is faced with several major proceedings with issues worth \$100s of millions to Georgia ratepayers."

The proposed cut would be about \$258,000 to the Commission's current budget.



If you have a story for the next GPSC News, please send to Bill Edge, bille@psc.state.ga.us. Next issue deadline is October 15, 2012.

Echols in Macon



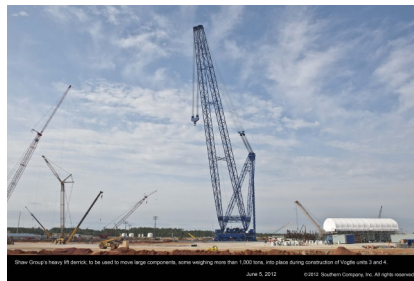
Commissioner Tim Echols takes part in a news conference in Macon on August 21. Bibb County officials held a ribbon cutting for the installation of an electric vehicle charging station at the Bibb County Courthouse.

Commission Approves Vogtle Expenses

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annual monitoring reports with the Commission. Plant Vogtle is the country's first new nuclear power construction project in 30 years.

"For this reporting period, Georgia Power is not seeking any changes to the schedule or certified budget amount of \$6.113 billion," said Commissioner Tim Echols. "If and when they do



bring changes in future periods, I'll scrutinize it closely."

In this Report, the Company

acknowledges potential cost increases associated with certain design changes made by the Consortium during the Design Control Document review process. However, the Company continues to state that the project is more favorable for customers than originally anticipated at the time of the Certification given the impact of cost savings from the Department of

Energy's Loan Guarantee, Production Tax Credits and the Construction Work in Progress in rate base. The Company will file its Seventh Semi-annual Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report on August 31, 2012 for the period ending June 30, 2012. In other action, the Commission issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) in Docket 35537 that would re-

quire telecommunications carriers that offer the subsidized service under the Lifeline program to charge a minimum monthly service fee of \$5 after application of the Lifeline discount. Comments on the NOPR are due to the Commission by September 20, 2012. The Commission is tentatively scheduled to adopt this rule at its October 2, 2012 Administrative Session.

Commission on YouTube

See Georgia Public Service Commission videos on YouTube, at www.youtube.com, on the Commission channel, GaPSC.

Follow the Commission on Twitter at #GPSC.

Commission Holds Telecom Hearings



Commission listens during meeting in Ringgold



State Senator Jeff Mullis speaks to the Commission in Chickamauga



Winford Long speaks to the Commission during the hearing in Ringgold

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mously opposed any increase in their local telephone rates.

Senator Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga) told the Commissioners any increase in local telephone rates would hurt economic development in their area and

other elected officials echoed similar comments.

Telephone customers also packed the Catoosa County Courtroom in Ringgold to voice their concerns about any proposed rate increases for Ringgold Telephone Company.

Many speakers noted Ringgold Telephone's active community involvement and their service following the devastating tornado in April 2011.

The Commission also held a public comment hearing in Taylor on August 9.

Commission Holds Hearings in Telecommunications Rate Cases

The Commission held the first hearings on telecommunications rates in almost 20 years on August 14 in Docket 35068.

The cases involve whether rates charged by three companies are just and reasonable and are comparable to the statewide average. The three companies are Public Service Telephone



Mark Baxter, attorney for cable companies, questions a witness

Company, Chickamauga Telephone Corporation and Ringgold Telephone Company. Witnesses for all parties testified during the day long proceeding.

The Commission is scheduled to issue a decision in this docket at its October 2, 2012 Administrative Session.

Staff and Budget Analysts Visit Plant Vogtle

Commission staff and budget analysts from the Office of Planning and Budget got a first hand look at the construction underway at the Nuclear Plant Vogtle construction site on August 22.

In the photo are Staff members **Blair Tinch, Bill Edge, Terry Pritchett and Earnest Whatley.**



Facilities Protection Recognized

More kudos for our **Facilities Protection Unit**, this time from the Tennessee Regulatory Authority. The TRA Comptroller's Performance Audit relative to Pipeline Safety recently recognized Georgia's Pipeline Safety Program as one of the nation's "model damage prevention programs."

Natural Gas PRP/SRP Audit Team Visits Atlanta Gas Light Company Construction Sites

On June 13, 2012, the Natural Gas Section's audit team for the Atlanta Gas Light Company's Pipe Replacement Program (PRP) and the Strategic Reinforcement Program (SRP) visited construction sites in the metro Atlanta area. The audit team is composed of Merline Brewer, Janey Chauvet, Bolin Killings, and Tony Wackerly. Keith Brook, Director Construction Operations and Ralph McCollum, Manager Regulatory Compliance were the AGLC representatives who arranged the site visits. The goal of the site visit was to enhance the audit team's understanding of the

construction process in the field in relation to the contracts and invoices reviewed during the quarterly audits.

Of the four sites visited, the first was the SRP 24-inch steel main project called the Johnson Header project. As seen in Photo-1, this project is 1.8 miles of replacement pipe and 5.8 miles of uprating at an estimated cost of \$22.3 million. The total Johnson Header project is estimated to cost \$70.8 million. The contractor performing the work is the Latex Construction Company headquartered in Conyers, Georgia. A portion of the existing 24-inch pipe is new construction or

replacement and the majority of the pipe will be "uprated", which means it will have the ability to operate at a higher pressure. The goal is to take the system from a Maximum Allowable Operating Pressure (MAOP) of 300 psi to a 546 psi. Portions of the 24" pipeline system have been certified to a MAOP of 720 psi.



Photo 1

Photo-1 illustrates a picture of construction taking place in a right-of-way that is 50 feet across. The 24-inch steel main is being placed in a trench in the left side of the picture. The structures in the trench are called "trench boxes" that protect workers who must perform work in the trench, such as welding.

In Photo-2, one can see where the 24-inch steel main was welded together and an epoxy



Photo 2

the epoxy is the coating applied to the steel pipe after the pipe is manufactured. The pipe in the photo is also coated in concrete to prevent the pipe from floating or drifting in creek crossings or other wet areas.

was applied to provide protection to the weld and the bare steel. The grey area on either side of

Tractors fitted with booms will move the 24-inch steel pipe sections to the trench. Prior to going into the trench, the pipe will be wrapped in a yellow rock sheeting for added protection. If the coating on the steel pipe is damaged, it could lead to corrosion.

In Photo-3, one can see where the 24-inch steel main was placed below a creek and has emerged on the other side. AGLC obtained environmental



Photo 3

work in creeks, streams, and rivers. The Latex Construction Company had to divert the creek in Photo-3 and then dig a trench for the pipe. This section of pipe was

permits from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to be coated in concrete. One can see the makeshift bridge on the right used by the heavy equipment. The sections of pipe were moved to the trench by a tractor-like vehicle fitted with a boom and sling. In Photo-4, one can see the length of pipe that was welded together prior to being transported to the trench. In order to allow the pipe to make turns or have



Photo 4

slight bends, the Latex Construction Company bent sections from another pipe and welded those sections onto the section of pipe that would make the turn or bend. This allowed for slight bends in the pipe with-

(Continued on page 5)

Natural Gas PRP/SRP Audit Team Visits Atlanta Gas Light Company Construction Sites

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of 12-inch steel main and a regulator station. Latex Construction Company was the contractor completing this installation.

poses.



Photo 5

In Photo 5, the yellow rock on shut-off valve being installed. The shut-off valve is used to isolate the steel main is visible late the ruptured or damaged prior to being placed in the pipe in times of emergency and trench.

The second location the audit team is taking place. In Photo 6 team visited was at Powers above the hill and to the left, a Ferry Road. This site consisted



Photo 6

In Photo 6, one can see a Cameron

regulator station was being installed.



Photo 7

Photo 7 provides another view of the 24-inch Cameron shutoff valve and its associated pipe extension on top.

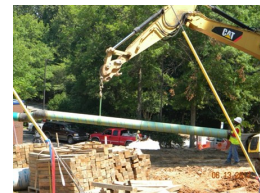


Photo 8

In Photo 8, one can see a Latex worker moving 12-inch steel main to a trench where it will be installed.



Photo 9

Photo-9 is a picture of the regulated station installed by Latex Construction Company.

This regulator station will be used to "step down" or reduce a MAOP of 546 psi to a MAOP of 300 psi. The system could handle a MAOP of 720 psi, but the parts of the current system were only tested at 546 psi. Since only a portion of the system was tested at 720 psi, the entire system can only operate at 546 psi. The pipe beyond the regulator station outlet will operate between 300 psi and 125 psi depending on the seasonal load.

The third project visited by the

audit team was the PRP Cobb Parkway project 12-inch steel main replacement. The project calls for 26,100 feet of 12-inch steel main, at an estimated cost of \$10.5 million.



Photo 10

As seen in Photo 10, the AGLC old steel main is attached to a bridge that crosses over a small creek. Beyond the creek, one can see white trucks of the Benton-Georgia contractors where the directional drilling unit is located. The drilling unit is boring toward the bridge.



Photo 11

Photo 11 provides another view of the bridge and the older steel main that will be replaced.



Photo 12

Photo 12 shows a water truck pumps water into a pit. The pump located on the far right is used to pump recycled drill slur-

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Natural Gas Team Visits

(Continued from page 5)

ry into a tank that supports the directional drilling unit. The directional drilling unit uses bentonite as a lubricant in the boring process and to pull the new main back through the bore hole from the opposite end. Electronic devices are used to monitor the position of the drill (up or down). If rock is encountered that inhibits drilling, the rock is excavated and the drilling will continue from that point.



In Photo 13, one can see

Photo 13

the directional drilling unit next to U.S. Highway 41 about three miles north of Highway 120. It is drilling south and when the drilling is completed, the directional drilling unit will pull the new main back through the bore hole.



Photo 14

Photo 14 shows the front end of the directional drilling unit where it enters the ground. One can see the water hose attached to the fire hydrant. A water meter is attached to the fire hydrant in or-

der to measure the water usage. The contractor has to pay for the water usage as part of the drilling process, and this cost is assessed to AGLC who passes the costs to the natural gas ratepayers.



Photo 15

In Photo 15, Benton-Georgia has a trailer with a generator and water tank to support the directional drilling unit.

The fourth and last project the audit team visited was the PRP Cobb Parkway and Gresham Ave where an 8-inch plastic is being installed by directional drilling method. The project calls for 4,000 feet of 8-inch plastic main at an estimated cost of \$1.6 million. This project is about 5 miles north on Highway 41 from the 12-inch steel main project (third project site visit).



Photo 16

As seen in Photo 16, a directional drilling unit is boring north toward Barrett Parkway.



Photo 17

In Photo 17, a Benton-Georgia contractor is running the directional drilling unit for the 8 inch plastic main replacement.



Photo 18

As seen in Photo 18, Benton-Georgia used a truck with a water tank and other equipment to support the 8-inch plastic main replacement.

The boring process and the pulling of main through the

bored hole is the same process that is used in the 12-inch steel main project discussed earlier. In plastic replacement, the special bore head uses a plastic insert that is attached to it and to the new main. If the new main encounters too much resistance while being pulled back through the bore hole, the insert will break. Therefore, the plastic insert protects the new main from damage.



Photo 19

Photo 19 provides a view of the direction the 8-inch plastic main replacement is moving along Highway 41 north toward Barrett Parkway. Along the path of the replacement, AGLC will ensure that shutoff values are in-

(Continued on page 7)

Employee News

Get Well

Angela Hwang in Budget and Fiscal Affairs suffered serious injuries on August 11 following a fall at her home. She underwent surgery on her right ankle August 14.

She is recuperating at home with limited visits to the office. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers as she recovers from the surgery and other injuries. She already misses being at work and seeing her friends at the Commission!



Sympathy

To **William Morgan** on the death of his father-in-law, Willis Morgan, on August 3. The funeral was held August 6.



Congratulations

To **Bill Edge** on the birth of a great-niece, Emery Rose Edge on August 8.



Lifeline Awareness Week in Georgia

Lifeline Awareness Week this year is September 10-16, 2012. The Commission's focus this year is making consumers aware of new eligibility requirements adopted this year by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Lifeline will provide eligible consumers with a \$9.25 discount on their telecommunications service whether landline or cellular. Lifeline service however, is available only to eligible consumers. Those requirements include:

- Consumers may receive only ONE discount per household that may be applied to either their wire line or wireless service.
- Federal rules prohibit consumers from receiving more than one Lifeline service.
- If a consumer or his or her household currently has more than one Lifeline discounted service, they must select a single provider immediately or be subject to penalties.
- In order to enroll in Lifeline,

potential subscribers must demonstrate their eligibility by showing proof of income or participation in a qualifying program.

- All Lifeline subscribers must annually re-certify their eligibility. During 2012, all Lifeline subscribers will be contacted by their service provider to re-confirm that they remain eligible in the program. If a subscriber does not reconfirm eligibility, he or she may lose their

Lifeline benefit.

"The Commission has taken steps to improve accountability in this program and prevent fraud," said **Commission Chairman Tim Echols**. "This is important to insure the program remains in place for those who really need it"

To sign up, consumers should contact their prospective telecommunications provider. Consumers should be aware that not all providers offer the Lifeline discount and should contact any potential provider be-

fore making a commitment.

Natural Gas PRP Visits

(Continued from page 6)

stalled with about 7 to 8 services between each shutoff valve. The goals of the frequent shutoff valves are to provide a more efficient response to an emergency

situation and ensure the flow of leaking natural gas is isolated quickly, as well as to reduce the number of customers affected if a shutoff valve is closed. The frequent shutoff valves not only limit the number of potential customers losing natural gas service, but they also limit the number of reights needed.

The audit team performs quarterly audits of the PRP and SRP program.

Georgia State Holidays For 2012

Columbus Day	October 8
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 22
Robert E. Lee's Birthday	November 23
Washington's Birthday	December 24
Christmas	December 25

Georgia State Holidays for 2013

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 21
Confederate Memorial Day	April 22
Memorial Day	May 27
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	September 2
Columbus Day	October 14
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 28
Robert E. Lee's Birthday	November 29
Washington's Birthday	December 24
Christmas	December 25

Commission Calendar



November 2012

1-Committees
6-Administrative Session
15-Committees
20-Administrative Session
22-23-Holiday
29-Committees

December 2012

4-Administrative Session
13-Committees
18-Administrative Session
27-Committees

January 2013

1--Holiday
2-Administrative Session

Commission Calendar

10-Committees
15-Administrative Session
21-Holiday
31-Committees
February 2013
5-Administrative Session
14-Committees
19-Administrative Session

NARUC

Winter Meeting 2013

February 3-6, 2013
Washington, D.C.

Summer Meeting 2013

July 13-17, 2013
Denver, Colorado

Annual Convention 2013

November 17-20, 2013
Orlando, Florida

SEARUC

Annual Meeting 2013

June 9-12, 2013
Asheville, North Carolina



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